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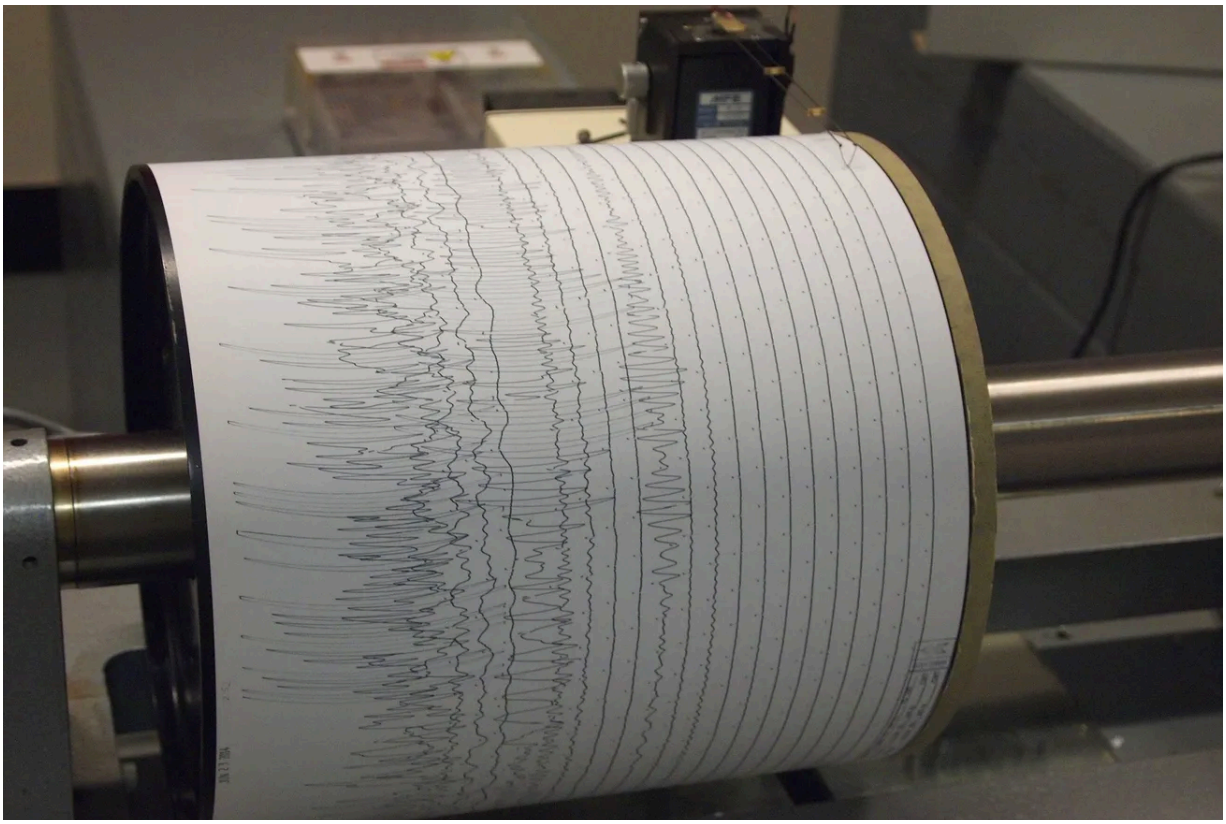
NEWS

Winchester residents feel Maine quake

NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY | STAFF WRITER

January 27, 2025 . 4:36 PM — 4 min read



Seismogram being recorded by a seismograph at the Weston Observatory in Massachusetts. COURTESY PHOTO/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/WESTON OBSERVATORY

Winchester residents took to Facebook on Monday morning after many felt the earth literally moving under their feet.

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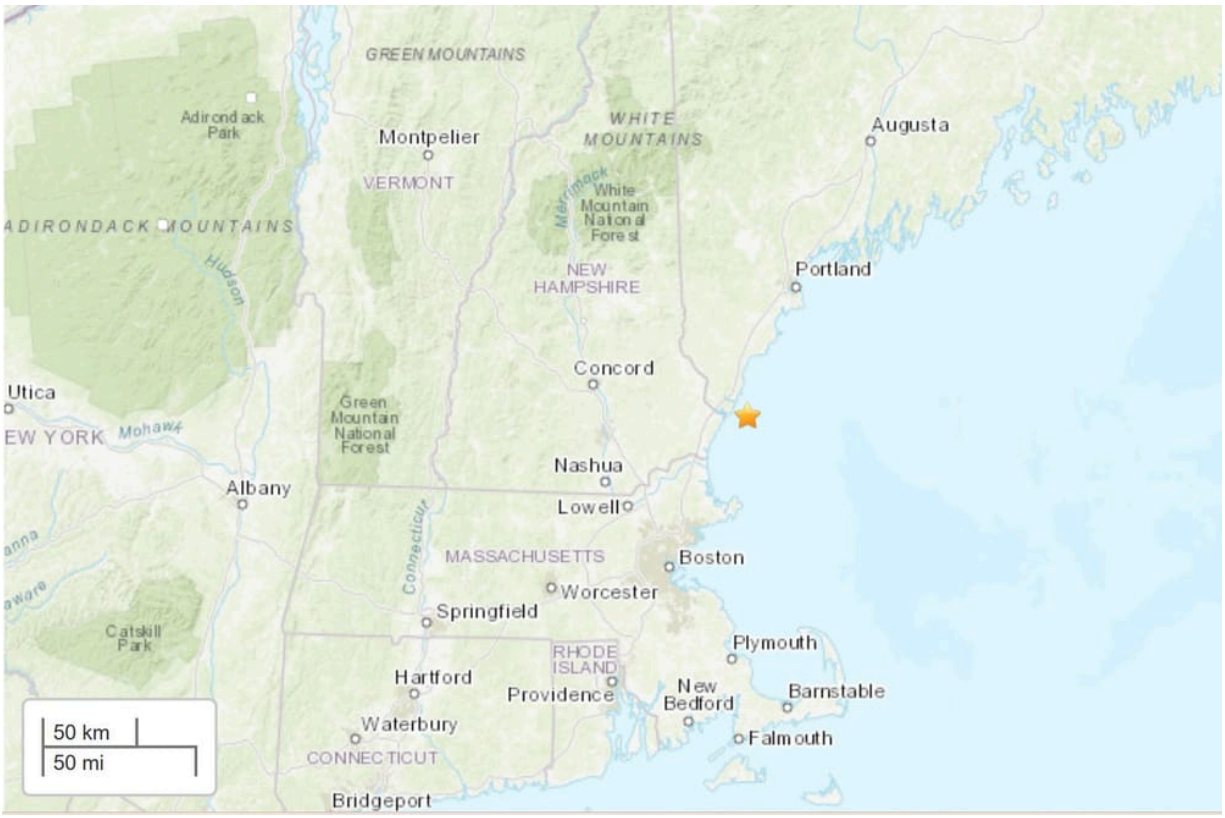
"Long low rumbling and things in my house shook," one resident wrote on the Winchester Residents Facebook Page. "Glad you asked so I know I am not imagining it."

So what was it? The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) estimated a 4.1 quake 10 kilometers southeast of York Harbor in Maine about 10:22 a.m. The quake was later downgraded to a 3.83.



A look at where the 3.83 earthquake in Maine took place on Jan. 27. COURTESY PHOTO/U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The shaking was felt down as far as Rhode Island and into New Haven, Conn.

The USGS estimated the chances of aftershocks at 13% for another quake of 3.0 or more, 2% for a 4.0 and less than 1% for any quake larger than a 5.0.

This isn't the first earthquake felt in the area, not even this year. A 2.2 quake 2 kilometers south of Henniker, N.H. was felt on Jan. 19. A day earlier, on

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Jan. 18, a 1.8 was felt 2 kilometers south southwest of Moody, Conn.

Reactions

Winchester residents said when the earthquake hit this morning, they thought it was a low-flying helicopter going over the town.

In other communities, residents didn't know to react. In West Medford, one resident thought it was her furnace backfiring.

"Here in Billerica, my house was shaking," one woman said.

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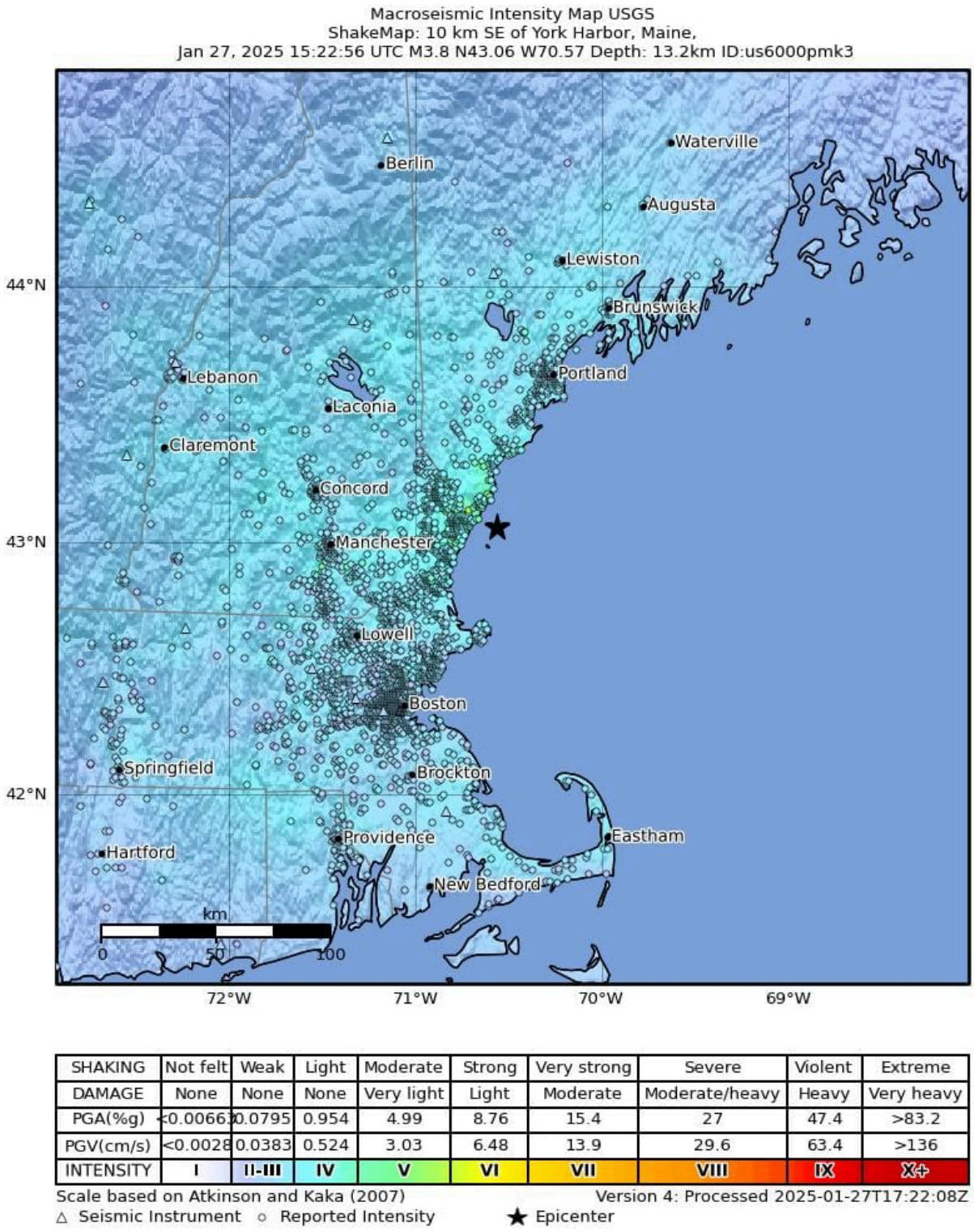

Check out the intensity of the Jan. 27 earthquake and how far away people felt the shaking. COURTESY PHOTO/U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Winchester residents were definitely on board with that sentiment.

“I felt the earth, move, under my feet...,” one said, quoting Carole [illegible] Feel the Earth Move.”

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Although some said the shaking wasn't that bad, more of a rumble, one Newbury resident said it was quite strong in her community.

"The house shook, the dog went crazy barking and our small granddaughter ran to me until it stopped after some seconds," she said.

Some were surprised the quake was felt this far down into Massachusetts. But others said it was "just another day in California."

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History of earthquakes in Massachusetts

If you think the Northeast doesn't have any major fault lines that cause earthquakes, you'd be wrong.

According to the Northeast States Emergency Consortium (NSEC), there are several, including the Ramapo Fault, a well-known fault zone that runs through New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

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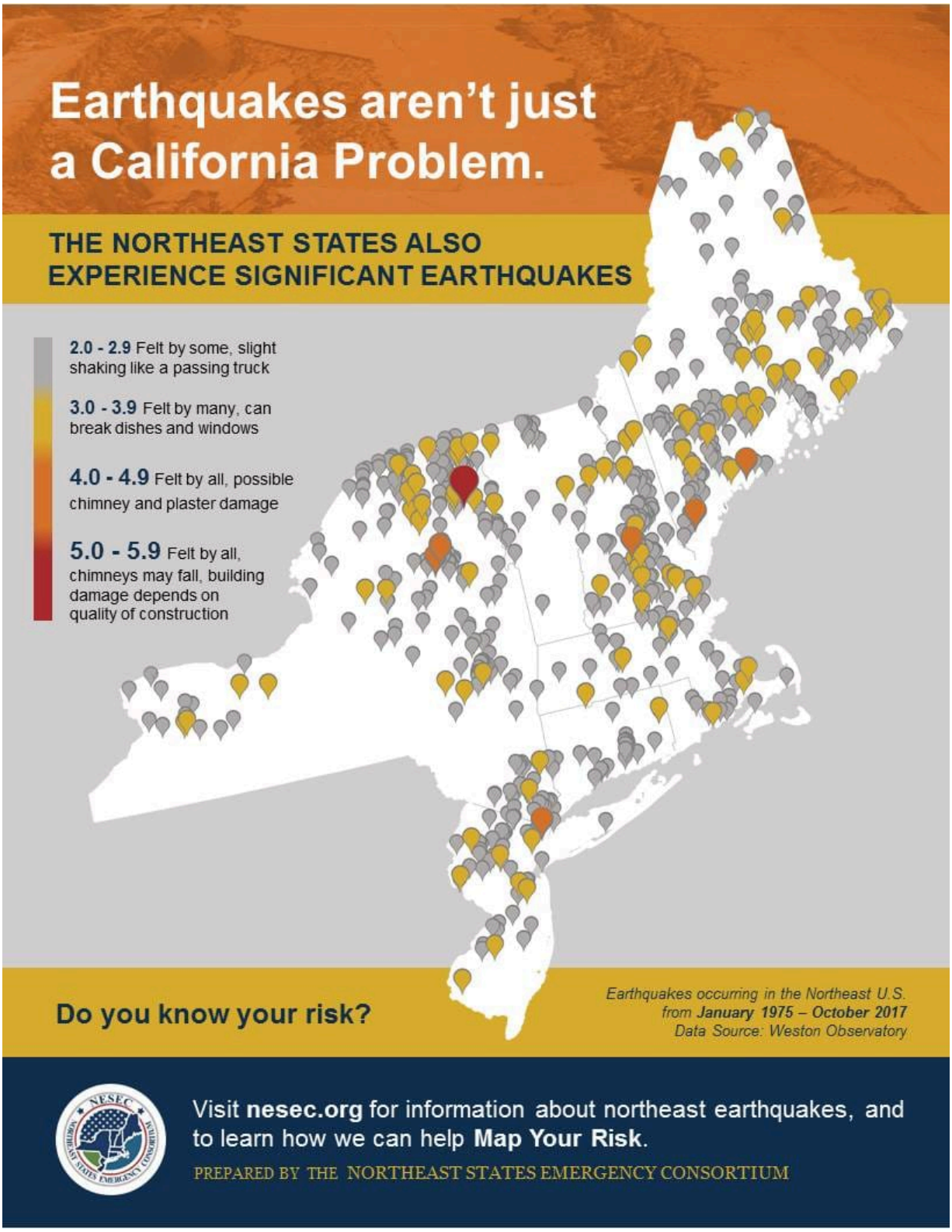
Earthquakes aren't just a California Problem.
THE NORTHEAST STATES ALSO EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT EARTHQUAKES
2.0 - 2.9 Felt by some, slight shaking like a passing truck
3.0 - 3.9 Felt by many, can break dishes and windows
4.0 - 4.9 Felt by all, possible chimney and plaster damage
5.0 - 5.9 Felt by all, chimneys may fall, building damage depends on quality of construction
Do you know your risk?
Earthquakes occurring in the Northeast U.S. from January 1975 – October 2017
Data Source: Weston Observatory
Visit nesec.org for information about northeast earthquakes, and to learn how we can help Map Your Risk.
PREPARED BY THE NORTHEAST STATES EMERGENCY CONSORTIUM

A look at Northeast earthquakes from January 1775 to October 2017. COURTESY PHOTO/NORTHEAST STATES EMERGENCY CONSORTIUM

In Massachusetts there's the Clinton-Newbury fault zone, which "consists of many faults along a line that forms a 97-mile arc that trends from its northeast end near Newbury, Massachusetts on the Atlantic coast southwestward to Clinton and Worcester, and then south into Connecticut."

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The NSEC states that “the historical record of earthquakes in the northeastern United States and adjacent areas goes back to the 1500’s, and a number of seismographs were operating in this region beginning in the early 1900’s. Routine reporting of instrumental data on earthquakes in this region began in the late 1930’s. The number of seismic stations in the Northeast increased significantly between 1970 and 1974. By 1974, area seismologists were operating a regional seismic network in the northeastern United States.”

One of the biggest earthquakes in the state took place on Nov. 18, 1775 at about 4:30 a.m. 30 miles east of Cape Ann. Scientists believe the quake to have been a 6.2 based on reports from as far as Nova Scotia and South Carolina.

“In Boston, the Cape Ann earthquake damaged or destroyed about one third of the chimneys, bent a number of church steeples, and damaged several brick walls,” NSEC history states. “Some streets in Boston were so covered with bricks that they were all but impassible. Damage to chimneys and brick walls was reported at several towns in northeastern Massachusetts, at Portsmouth, N.H. and at Portland, Maine.”

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Historic Wood Cut Print of 1744 Newburyport MA 5.6 Earthquake

COURTESY PHOTO/NORTHEAST STATES EMERGENCY CONSORTIUM

The Cape Ann quake followed an earlier 5.6 shock from Oct. 29, 1727. In 1963, another Cape Ann quake of 4.0 caused some damage and was followed by several smaller aftershocks.

Overall, about "400 earthquakes centered in Massachusetts are known from the earliest reported event on December 19, 1668 in northeastern Massachusetts through 2016," NESC reports. "Most of the earthquakes have been in the northeastern part of the state, with also a large number of earthquakes centered in the south coast area and Cape Cod. In addition, some earthquakes have occurred in the central part of the state."

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Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

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Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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